

Then he wrote a poem about
that
and died,
first, they say, giving a gulp
of water to a stranger.

And only 32.

His poems were never
as dramatic

John B.

Trying to shake
T.B., a common
trouble with hatters,
John B. Stetson left
Philadelphia to go to
Central City.
On the way he caught a
rabbit and turned it
into a hat. And tho
people laughed, he wore it
and his lungs got better.
So he made more hats and then
needed a factory, so many
people wanting one
to keep oats in, or grain.
Or for slapping ornery cattle
or beating small grass fires.
Some of the hats lasted
15 years, or 20.
John B. Stetson lasted for 76

Party

First he ate as many
devilled crabs as possible,
trying to remember why
he was there.

Then, he considered
falling thru the buttons
of the slightly
cross-eyed
beautician.
But she only had zippers.

Finally, realizing that if
this wasn't going to be
a total bust
he'd have to try something
different,

he leaned into the most
convenient belly
whispering,
since this is a cocktail party
let me introduce my cock to your....

You should have seen her
hors d'oeuvre tremble
at that

-- Lyn Lifshin

Albany, New York

One More Good One. Why Not?

to be writing poetry at the age of 50
like a schoolboy
surely, I must be crazy;
racetracks and booze and arguments
with the landlord;
watercolor paintings under the bed
with dirty socks;
a bathtub full of goldfish
and a garbage can lined with
underground newspapers;
a record player that doesn't work
a cassette that doesn't work,
and I don't work --
I sit between 2 lamps,
bottle on the floor
begging a 20 year old typewriter
to say something in a way
well enough
so they don't confuse me
with the more comfortable
practitioners;
this is certainly not a game for
flyweights or ping pong players --
arguments to the contrary being strictly
grammar school.

-- but once you get the taste, it's good to get your
teeth into
words. I forgive those who
can't quit.
I forgive myself.
this is where the action is,
this is the bet-down hot horse that
comes in.